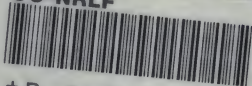


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SILVER SHIMMER.

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# SILVER SHIMMER.



BY  
WILLIAM DARWIN CRABB.

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1874.

69936

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HIS scant unequal Silver Shimmer  
On the crystal sea  
Of Poetry—

On whose deep sea these faint rhymes glimmer—

To her, the one who read them first,

Who most inspired them

And admired them;

Whose tropic heart hath interspersed

The sunshine of her sunny fate—

These glints of fancy, broken-versed,

These glints of song, I DEDICATE.







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# SILVER SHIMMER.

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## AN ASPIRATION.



FEEL some deep and tall eternal aspiration

For something out beyond the common whirl—

For music with a grander intonation

Than even grand old Ocean's, in its swirl—

A lunging upward of the part immortal,

To catch a flying glimpse beyond "the portal!"

Last night mine eyes walked o'er the far embordered

Blue heavens; and they strolled along its seas  
Of silver clouds, and 'long the wild, unordered,  
Swift comet-rivers—leaned against its purple  
trees,

Whose buds are waving stars, whose tops do blossom

With suns and moons, which toss, O, far across  
them.

I thought I saw, trailed upward thro' the crimson  
Of sunset clouds, the shadow of that thought.  
My soul leaps westward—leaps and swiftly swims  
on

The crimson flood—I reach my hands, and it  
—is not !

My soul falls backward, sick from its exertion,  
And feeling all desire amid its deep desertion.

This frets the flesh away—this trackless yearning—

This pleading, everlasting call !

O this eternal reaching, and returning

Heart-empty to this tame and barren ball !

Ah ! even Cleopatra's love were breastless,

When this aspiring adds *unrest* to *restless* !



## THE GOLDEN GATE.



HERE stand two sun-lit battlements,  
 The pillars of the Golden Gate.  
 They, many a year of olden date,  
 As angel-builded resting tents  
 Have seemed to weary, beaten ships,  
 Which gleamed with eyes—with eyes untold  
 That gazed above stern-bitten lips—  
 Dreamed dreams of Love, but gazed for gold.

A gate between of shining wave  
 Swings out and in and everlasting.  
 Here feet find rest—some hearts, a grave,  
 And hopes fulfill, or die of fasting.

And, as a mouth drilled thro' the mounts,  
 It seems to breathe a breath of gold  
 Out of the deep-gorged peaks that hold  
 Their mints of minerals and the founts  
 Of blessed streams, with beds of treasure



And banks of wealth and blooming glory—  
Where Nature is eternal pleasure,  
And trees are green, when Time is hoary.

And—like a large rich-laden flower  
Of gorgeous hue and deepest sweet  
Where bees crowd on with fretting feet—  
The Bay blooms up, with under power,  
From ocean's heart of trembling blue ;  
And men crowd on its restless rim,  
Where steeples tower and banners flow,  
And sunny winds float sound of hymn.

The city of the Golden Gate—  
Shall she be built a grand and fit  
Metropolis? or she forget  
The Builder of all good and great,  
Till He shall strike his fiery hand  
Beneath the proud magnificent  
And sink her streets of hollow sand—  
And sea-swift lull her discontent?

Shall she become the dream fulfilled  
Of Poe's fantastic poetry—  
Become "The City in the Sea?"

And Ocean tread the iron-willed?  
And rocks rise up in wrath and close  
The eye-entrancing Golden Gate,  
And leave it to a strange repose,  
Or winds' and sea-waves' long debate?



## A DOUBLE PROPHECY.



HE amethystine sky of youth is not  
 So brilliant purple, as it was of old.  
 I see much farther through the ways of  
 men—

Can read, thro' human eyes, much deeper down  
 In hearts, the motives of the reckless world—  
 Can better make interpretation of  
 The touch of human hands, if they be true,  
 Or false—can see a buried, pallid sorrow  
 Hid 'neath the flowers and grasses of a laugh—  
 Can analyze a tear, if it be sweet  
 Or bitter—aye, am wiser in the ways  
 Of unaspiring earth. But then I know  
 I cannot see so deep into sublime  
 Delightful skies. The limit of my look—  
 My vision Heaven-ward, is drawing in.  
 No thought of God so pure, so high, so sweet,  
 But I could reach it with the finger tips  
 Of boyish faith, and touch the gems, and smile  
 With expectation of some better day



Wearing a crown beset with those sweet truths—  
And then to promise better days was promise  
Of loveliness indeed. The leaves seemed cut  
In image of some truth, some bliss—seemed cut  
With diamond of God's finger ; and the streams  
Seemed pouring o'er the tongue of Nature to  
God's sea of wisdom ; and upon those streams  
I made my daily voyages, and drank  
The boundless waters of this sea. The stars,  
I held them in my hand, and praised their Maker.  
There was no spirit tempest—no despair  
Could sink them in the sea of sky—no doubt  
Could stir its waves to toss them from my reach.  
I held the hand of her of youthful beauty,  
And followed in the trail of eye-gaze  
That reached far nearer to the infinite  
Than mine. 'Twas easy then to journey up  
Unto the citadel of God. It seemed  
The very angels wound their fingers round  
Her ringlets, shimmering in the sun of health.  
Her tread seemed ever bearing up ; and I  
Reached up and after. The glory of the skies  
Well had been proud of the resemblance of  
Her mellow eyes—the glowing red of eve,  
Been proud of kinship to the redness of  
Her cheeks. The spirit, that did breathe the life

Into the universe, could press her soul,  
It seemed to me, and not pollute it by  
The touch. 'Twas in the May-time, and I had  
Bethought myself insane to think THAT May  
Of trust and joy would desolate, as Mays  
Of seasons fall beneath the shrouds of winters.

My dreams were more delirious with delight  
Even than the bubbling real. But then the mind  
Is half a prophet; and the things we spurn  
As superstitions, by the reeling head  
Of reason, retreat by day, and reattack  
Us in the night, and pillage every citadel.  
We waken in the morning, sad, at first,  
Then call it superstition, and rebuild.  
The capture of a joy, the stabbing of  
A hope, the murder of a love are all  
Preacted in our dreams; and yet we laugh  
And call it superstition. *So with me:*  
When flowers were at their fullest, and the grass  
Was colored emerald, and when the moon  
Bloomed brightest of the May, then stars began  
To tremble (in my dream) along the west  
And toss beyond my reach—then one by one  
Sink in the rolling of a distant storm.  
The moon began to shake upon its stem,

And then it laid its face beneath the flood,  
Which still came nearer. Now the roof sounded  
with the roar

Of winds and waters. Flowers broke from their  
stems

And rolled in the mud, and then were sunken  
In water, as the stars had sunk. I could  
Not see far up, and, as I gazed about  
Upon the washing, wasting earth, I thought  
Of *her*; and she was distant; and the waves  
Had tossed between us; and the drift of wrecks  
Too thick to number, struggled out in ruin.  
The waves grew thick with muddiness at times,  
Then rushed with fury on; and waifs and wood,  
In pieces, piled around my feet. I cried!  
But seething of the waves and battering  
Of floating pieces outspoke my utterance:  
And then I looked and saw she, whom I loved,  
Was drowning in the sea—drifting beyond  
The reach of me forever. This was a dream.  
I wakened with the superstition deep  
Upon my soul; and then I combed the tangles  
Out of my locks, and combed the superstition  
Out of my brain with the electric teeth  
Of thoughtless laugh; then ran to meet my—  
*nameless.*

But she had wed another, strange and tall !  
An avalanche of snows had slidden down  
Upon me in one night ; and all the glow  
And glory of the mountain foot and vale  
Had shrivelled in a night. I cast my looks  
Up to the former amethystine skies—  
They hung a broad and ebon coffin lid,  
Too mighty for my feeble strength to lift,  
Too hard to penetrate, to get above,  
And so I could but turn to digging down,  
And sinking deeper in the treacheries  
And lower wisdom of this barren world.

Leaves now seem handkerchiefs of Nature, hung  
Shaking before my face in mockery ;  
And I have wandered from those streams that  
    flow  
Into God's sea ; and dust from fruitless digging  
Of grumbling men worries me on—and yet  
Sometimes I would aspire again. The thoughts  
Of that luxuriant summer I have seen  
Come, in my musing, and convert the frail  
And flickering spirit fire, I kindled as  
My sun went down, into the image of  
A balmy May sun ; and my chamber walls  
Of marble color turn to amethyst ;

And stars hang in the window, and I reach  
To handle them—and then I start, and mutter:  
“’Tis but a superstition!” But the *heart*  
Says this is real. So I’ve come to call  
Our dreams and reveries the deepest truth—  
The prophets of our active lives. Here is  
The remnant of my hope, *that this day-revery*  
*Doth prophesy the restoration of*  
*What vanished with fulfillment of a dream.*

2



## TALES OF A BORDER TAVERN.



T. was a place where people mix  
 Of all grades up from the border "bricks"  
 And men of the gentler, polished tricks,  
 To men of morals and minds correct  
 As Pharisees after the strictest sect.  
 It was a place of diet rough,  
 Of diet scarce, but jokes enough.  
 It was a place of creviced faces  
 And hanging heads and troubled paces.  
 It was a place where many a man  
 Has held his head in a cloud of smoke,  
 Seated aside, as if a ban  
 Had driven him out o' the midst o' folk.  
 It was a place where many a one  
 Has sat and smoked and stories spun  
 And watched the smoke curl up and off,  
 His mind, on the wings of every puff,  
 Flowing away to another time—  
 To an olden love in another clime.  
 It was a night in January;

And a "norther" had just swept down  
Driving the sunny day from town,  
"Swift and cold as the very scratch,"  
As the landlord said. "Thunder! very!"  
Said the lawyer, lighting a tuft of grass  
To light his pipe instead of a match,  
At the same time grasping the wooden latch  
And slamming the door till it shook the glass.  
The place was hard and the people, too;  
And yet as I write is written true;  
A rough truth's better'n smooth-tongued lies.  
The cold north wind had whipped us in,  
And the bar was full of smoke and men,  
And ruffian thoughts and plots of sin,  
That warred the silent memories  
Coaxing us back to calmer seas,  
Coaxing us out o' the horrid din  
Back to memories sweet as youth—  
Back to memories strong as truth!  
"Hello! Rick Dane, ye old consarn!  
Ef you ain't here! Now spin us a yarn—  
Best in the market. Come! none o' yer slang,  
But spit out yer yarn!" shouted a man  
With a look of rock—yet, nine to ten,  
His heart was flesh. "Well, let me hang,"  
Muttered Rick Dane, "Ef you come to find

This chap in duty, or yarns behind !”  
 The dreamy eyes of a lazy boast  
 Suddenly rose from their bed o’ sleep,  
 As he saw Dane’s face grow sad as a ghost,  
 And he said to us: “ I look fur a heap  
 O’ stirrin’ story fro’ Rick to-night;  
 Fur his face is ez long ez the ‘ moral law;’  
 An’ suthin’ has given his brave heart fright—  
 There’s suthin’ a troublin’ his mental craw !”  
 “ Well, then, if I must, I must, I ’spose;  
 So fill me a pipe—there ! Boys, here goes!  
 But, ’fore I begin, let the laziest man  
 Stir up the fire—en’ thet’s you, Dan!  
 Hurrah! for a thrust at the red-hot blaze!  
 Ho! for whiff on whiff, till a blue smoke-maze  
 Shall be unto me and the yarn I tell  
 As a lady’s veil, in throwin’ a spell  
 O’ increased beauty over the veiled!  
 Yes, ho! fur a thrust in the deep red fire,  
 And a deeper thrust in a redder heart!  
 Blaze up, old fire, you’re rude assailed!  
 Go up, old bald head smoke—aspire,  
 Ez the Scripturs say! Now I’m ready to start.”

RICK DANE’S STORY.

I’ve rid on these borders when  
 I tell ye ’twaz awfully rough



With winds and the dust and thousands  
Uv other sich horrible stuff.  
Ez the preacher would hev it—but give me  
A whiff to open the way!  
Whew! somebody stir up the fire;  
Fur the very devil's to pay  
I should say from the speed o' the wind!  
And, boys, the cut uv its whizz  
Reminds me o' many a blusterin'  
Night with a rushing o' biz  
Thet wuz bloody ez butchers!—but somehow  
Or 'nother I haven't the nack  
O' keepin' the text, so I've gotten  
A good ways out o' the track.  
Well, the time I am speakin' uv, boys,  
It wuz a night thet wuz dark  
Ez the landlord's hands, sometimes,  
When he stirs the fire fur a spark  
With the other end o' the poker—  
A night ez wuz still ez if stark,  
Ez tho' thet the air wuz a lump  
Ez hard and ez black ez a coal.  
It wuz a time, boys, ez when thet  
The price uv a human soul  
Wuz ez cheap ez the price uv a “lager,”

An' sometimes scurcely ez dear—  
When the towns wuz ez scattered an' few  
Ez eyes that never a tear  
Hez ever run out uv—besides, boys,  
The few little towns thet thur waz  
Wuz treacherous places, you bet,  
And laughed at the nonsense o' "laws."  
Well, I wuz a-lodgin', one night,  
In one o' them treacherous places;  
I hed been on a hunt that day,  
And hed jest got out o' the traces  
An' turned into bed, to think  
Uv the times when I wuz a boy,  
An' think uv a hand ez wuz wrinkled  
And old and trembly, an' toy  
With a hand ez wuz young an' steady  
And smooth as the ball o' yer eye,  
An' chuck at a chin ez—but that is  
A matter o' her an' I!  
I'm tellin' o' when I wuz lodgin'  
In one o' them treacherous towns.  
Ez hard as a flint, it wuz,  
Comparin' its morals to stones.  
I lay on my bed for a minit—  
Then suthin' disturbed me, ez if

The voice o' distress, or the like  
Hed given my spirit a "diph."  
I turned, an' I listened, but then  
Thar wuzn't the sign uv a sound—  
An' I know'd it was only a kind  
Uv a fancy a flittin' around.  
But still, ez I lay on my bed,  
Thar wuz suthin' kept tellin' to me:  
"Go down to the street that is under  
The hill, Rick Dane, an' see!"  
I laughed at myself fur bein'  
A suddent a tremblin' slave  
To only a kind uv a fancy,  
That boasted myself so brave.  
And yet ez I laughed there wuz suthin'  
I hat kept up a pitiful callin':  
"Go down to the street, an' go  
The house, uv the lime-stone wall, in—  
To the street down under the hill,  
An' rescue a star that is fallin'!"  
A man that is ever so brave,  
To a danger that's said in the ear,  
When it's said to the sperit, may set him  
A feelin' almighty queer.  
I laughed as a crazy man does,

Wi' not very much o' the feelin'  
Uv laughter into my soul ;  
Fur I feared some feller was " heelin' "  
Some one ez wuz better'n', worthier'n',  
The rest uv us rowdies that roved—  
Some one ez wuz better 'un us,  
An' God an' the angels loved ;  
An' which they had whispered to me:  
"Ef I would go down to the street—  
Step into the shoes uv one  
That hed purer and youthfuller feet,  
And, if need be, die fur the same!"—  
Well, I finally riz  
And went to the door a minit,  
To listen ef there wuz the whizz  
Uv bullets in hearin' ; if so  
To go to the place o' the " biz."  
Then I went to the wall that wuz lime-stone  
On the street that wuz under the hill.  
I stood—and, exceptin' the chug  
Uv my breast, it wuz terrible still—  
When, shortly, an' all uv a suddent,  
The scream uv a woman burst  
Out o' that house infernal,  
Wi' voices o' men accurst !

I broke in the door in a rush ;  
And, back in the horrible room,  
Three cowardly cut-throat men,  
More devilish thar in the gloom,  
Threatened, with knife and pistol,  
A woman that jest hed begin  
To drop the blossom o' purity  
Under the frost o' sin.  
'Twuz only a minit—and thar's whar  
I got this scar—d'ye see?  
And them three men went—well—whar  
God is judge, not me!  
I felt it wuz perfectly right, fur  
Suthin' within kept callin':  
“This is the liftin' o' her that  
Only a little is fallen!”  
*She* said “For the sake of a love . . . . !  
But I'm going to cleanse this breast ;  
For, because I have lost a part,  
Then why should I lose the rest?  
When God has made me as pure  
As I was when I was a girl,  
I'll write to you, the angel  
That saved me, and send you a curl.”  
So why should I be too hard  
On a woman ez only wuz wild

To run away fro' the thoughts  
O' the times when she wuz a child,  
When I wuz doin' the same?  
We forgive the folly o' men;  
Then why not her, who went back to the  
right,  
While men go on in their sin?—  
Hure is the yellor curl  
An' these are the words she wrote:  
"I've kept my word, and God  
And the angels have helped me out.  
If now I am not so pure as  
When I was a girl, I know  
That, ere this letter you read,  
I'll be purer—be whiter than snow.  
For shadows of earth are going  
Down, and a beautiful light  
Is showing my spirit up!  
God bless you! you started me right!"  
So, boys, be still, fur her spirit  
Is near, an' thet is enough  
To smooth the waves o' my heart  
Thet usually run so rough!

Rick Dane was done; and a silent spell  
Over the group a moment fell.

Then an old man, up to his eightieth year,  
Turned sharp on me, and said—"Look here!"

## THE OLD MAN'S STORY.

## UP THE MISSOURI.

You're one o' them fellers the world has give  
The tipsy name uv a "genis"—  
Whose eyes look up 'neath the skirts o' the skies,  
Ez the blossoms and leaves which green is.  
You're one o' them fellers as never has lifted  
A hand or taken a stroke in  
The world of work; but only has written  
O' hearts ez are splintered and broken.  
You're one o' the few ez God has made  
Fur suthin' ez turned to a dreamer—  
Thet God has given the glory 'f a flag  
Ez turned to only a streamer—  
Thet the clamorin' herd, ez the poets say,  
Has crowned your head wi' laurels;  
Yet never has fought a lick, but writ  
O' the unpoetical quarrels—  
With heart ez a girl's, an touched, ez easy  
Ez to fall from a tree, with pity;  
Too poor to give to the sufferer anything more  
Than a most uneatable ditty—

One o' them fellers ez in your songs  
Uproots the biggest o' mountains,  
But then, ez to facts, don't lift the tiniest pebbles  
Thet shines at the edge o' the fountains—  
One o' them rambling fellers, I 'spose,  
Thet hez some sort uv a mission  
That's out o' the reach o' the computation  
O' "simple addition."

This world is real enough—too real for many a  
one,  
Who started with good decision.  
Perhaps you fellers are here to fool us, at times,  
With a fanciful touch Elysian.  
You're one o' them fellers ez rambles around  
And gathers a line from each human,  
From "the man in the ditch" and the only  
Charity-shunned of earth, a woman  
Low in the dust o' sin, to the man thet glitters  
In gold and the jewels taken  
From this same woman, on whom he has rolled  
The rock of a curse and crushed her and left  
her forsaken.  
You're one o' them fellers ez wanders around after  
A line on love an' a salable story—



To turn the grief uv a brother, deep ez a heart,  
to a song

To lengthen your tower uv glory!

Now, I am a man of little to say; the devil I care

For the pettier woes thet worry

The greedier world; but my word's ez sure

Ez the sun, tho' I talk in a hurry.

I hev no lies of love—no flashin' words

To build a palace o' fiction;

But I hev the logs o' facts to build a cabin o' truth,

To tell in a humble diction.

So shake your girlish tresses off o' yer face,

And I will open this locket !

And tell me now ef a worthier eye

Rolls in a human socket ?

Or yit of the universe-eye, the blue sky, is—

Tossed in its place, whose tears are started

By the love o' God pervadin' creation, an' even

The heart o' the broken-hearted ?

On that side is *her*, on this is the child, jest the  
pictur

O' her, wi' face to the face o' the mother;

An' that is the way their faces stood that time  
on the bank,

One face and heart to the other.

You may laugh at the thought, your hair's the same  
Ez the hair of that three year girl's ;  
But then if yer heart's az pure an' ez wise as her's,  
Ye needn't be 'shamed o' yer curls.  
Well, how them two are gone from me now,  
And their faces are set in a locket—  
How two sweet souls went up, ez a bird, and my  
sperits down  
Ez the dyin' blaze uv of a rocket,  
Is this: 'Twas only a step to the bank, an' the  
snows  
Had started a terrible freshet,  
For this wuz the time, speakin' ez men o' cattle,  
The meltin' snows o' the mountains "flesh it."  
And her, whose hair wuz like ez to yourn, went  
down to  
The edge, and set to a lookin' under  
And thinkin' them dreamy things, ez you poets!  
I see now that was a blunder  
To let her go thar; her ma saw then, and called;  
But her call wuz lost in the thunder  
Uv muddy Missouri !—she shot  
Like the flash uv an eye, and under  
Her arms she gathered the child ; and, jest as  
she turned  
So I see the glow o' their faces,

And our hearts clumb up to the highest limb, an'  
a shout

O' rejoicin' mixed in wi' the roar o' the masses,  
The water-beast butted his turbulent horns

Mad into the bank—so my darlings  
Went down wi' the sand, an out uv my reach,  
With a cry, ez the cry uv the starling's—

(It's a story the mother related my child of a  
starling

Ez cried with a tremble o' pity,  
“I can't get out !” an' this is the cause o' my  
figur.

It happened somewhar in a city.)

So you see why I tuk my locket and went fro,  
home ;

For how cud I stay in a dwellin'  
Where tongues o' fire and cloven wuz set on all  
That I see, a burnin' an' tellin'

O' what wuz no more—an' tellin' o' slidin' banks,  
Jest down beside o' the thicket,

Where, 'stead o' the voices o' two, is only the  
single

Trill uv a hermit cricket !

One long breath and a single glance  
From each o' the curious audience ;

Then a little silence—a sad suspense,  
 When the lawyer suddenly broke the trance: ..

THE OLD LAWYER'S STORY.

Them times, when I wuz a young man,  
 Warn't ez times is now.  
 We studied our law from nature,  
 And only studied ez how  
 This un was guilty, or that un,  
 And not how to pick out a flaw  
 With technical words, or suthin',  
 And spile the justice o' law.  
 Thar wuzn't no need uv a scholar,  
 Or a head crammed full o' the books  
 Thet lawyers of cities were usin',  
 But jest to know uv the crooks  
 Thet ort to be straightened, to show  
 - The ekety into the case—  
 And the best way o' knowin' wi' us wuz  
 To look at the criminal's face.  
 Them wuz the times when ruffins  
 Done the most o' the "biz."  
 An' all the lawyers I knowed uv  
 Waz them ez pled wi' the whizz  
 O' bullets an' sich, an' so  
 I warn't but little use—

O' course I done my levelest  
 To gabble agin abuse.  
 But then I used my judgment  
 Of when, an' how, an' whar,  
 And didn't risk my life  
 On a pint o' law too far.  
 Ef ever a place on arth  
 Could hev a 'proprit name,  
*That* could hev "necessity,"  
 Which an' it wuz the same ;  
 Fur it knowed no law, exceptin'  
 The little I knowed—you bet  
 I knowed I better keep low—  
 I wuz lawyer enough fur that. . . . .

In the little town—no matter  
 What the name o' the place is—  
 The streets was full uv a sea  
 Uv rough up-lookin' faces ;  
 An', (in the middle o' all this  
 Tide o' tanny grins,  
 An' eyes ez deep as wells  
 An' dim wi' the dust o' sins ;  
 An' beards ez grizzled ez law books,  
 Tossed up wi' the sea, and down  
 Over the lawless bosoms

An' under the foams o' frown)  
Thar ther wuz *one* face 'o beauty,  
Like a drop o' melted gold  
Afloat in a sea o' brass.

Then I wuzn't quite so old;  
An' it set me hard a-thinkin',  
What in the course o' life  
Hez throwed this orange o' beauty  
Into the mire? What knife  
Haz stolen into the garden  
And cut her off o' the tree  
And throwed her over the walls  
Into this muddy sea?"

I wuz younger then than now,  
I would hev the court to know,  
An' I wuz a jedge o' beauty,  
Ez well ez a jedge o' law—  
I'z a jedge o' human natur,  
I beg yer leave to say,  
An' I saw in a minit, thet, though  
Her heart hed a tetch o' *gray*,  
I could make it plain to a jury  
Thet it wazn't *black* wi' sin—  
Thet thar wuz a question of whether  
The devil or God would win.  
Thinks I, in a minit more,

Ef Christ forgiv the thief  
And pardoned the fallen woman,  
I'm right in my belief,  
There's a chance o' savin' her.

So I wedged through the surly crowd,  
Till I teched the scarlet woman—

An' my heart it beat aloud,  
For fear I 'uz makin' a blunder;

But I spoke in a kindly way;  
An' ez quick ez the snap uv a trigger

She turned; an' a' little spray  
O' blushes flew up her face,

An' a glance o' mystery  
Come out o' the fine red ground work

Thro' the jewel uv her eye.  
I mentioned about a sister

Ez purty ez even her,  
And how 'twould 'a' broke my heart

To see her whar she were;  
An' I tol' uv another girl

She set me a-thinkin' uv—  
An' how 'twould 'a' driv me mad

To 'a' seen her a soiled dove.  
Fur a minit the glance in her eye,

Ez a shiny piece o' gold,  
Dropped back in her rily soul—

An then come out more bold!  
Then, ez we walked away,  
She lowered her head a bit,  
An' I saw her brow grow set,  
And her bosom lift, an' a grit  
Uv her teeth, ez went like a chill  
Over my mind; and she said:  
"Over the eastern hills—  
A pity that I'm not dead!—  
And up in the little school  
On the side o' the olden hill,  
I stood at the head o' my class,  
And my little ship on the rill  
Was first o' the little fleet. . . .  
Time bore me away to school,  
Out o' the love o' home,  
And into the chill o' rule:  
And all o' the lore o' books,  
And all o' the polished ways  
That money could buy were mine.  
But, oh! in the flow of days  
And out o' the love o' home,  
And out o' the love of all,  
I caught at the eye of a passing one,  
And his voice began to call.  
A love sprang up in my desert,



And stolen interviews;  
And so, as my love 'gan gaining,  
My fears began to lose.  
Ah! I was too young to know  
That so much belonged to me,  
And to know that a thief would trouble—  
Well, *here I am*—you see !”

And so we parted. I watched  
To see whar the woman went,  
Fur the roughened veil that covered  
My sympathies wuz rent.  
And soon, ez I passed the street,  
In a thoughtful sort o' streak,  
I saw her look out uv a window,  
And a tear crep' down her cheek.  
Thet night, ez the moon come up,  
I stole from the noisy bar  
To the shade uv a vacant dwellin',  
Thet slept beneath a star—  
Leaned thar in sight o' the window,  
Thet her tear hed glistened through;  
An' the sky waz over-speckled  
With stars, an' over blue.  
An' the moon shone in her window,  
The only light wuz thar,

Exceptin' Mars uv a blood-red,  
Ez tho' 'twuz a symbol star  
Shining into her room,  
Ez a symbol uv her wo.  
The other stars wuz so lofty  
And her life wuz down so low  
That they couldn't reach the woman;  
An' so, ez I sed, red Mars  
Wuz glimmerin' thro' the glasses,  
And that wuz all uv her stars.  
Then a broken-hearted voice  
Come out on the air to me:  
" God, give me a broken spirit !  
God give me the will o' Thee ! "  
The red-lit Mars, ez an eye  
Weepin' tears o' blood, gleamed  
Silently over her fingers,  
And the moon above 'em beamed  
Whiter than if foretelling  
Uv marble above her head.  
I heard her pray repentance  
Fur " a pity that I'm not dead ! "  
Her head bowed in the shadow,  
And then, as a ghost uv love,  
It rose in the marbly moonlight,  
Ez her hopes went down or above—

Rose on the marbly moonlight,  
Jest ez her spirit fought  
The dark way o' livin' she oughtn't,  
Then the light way o' livin' she ought.  
Then again the broken voice  
Come out on the air to me:  
"God, give me a broken spirit!  
God, give me the will o' Thee!  
But, Jesus, thou knowest the stain  
That covers the all I am;  
And the world will not forget it,  
Though my soul grow sweet as balm.  
Thou knowest the pure in spirit,  
But the world is not so wise—  
To the wayward their words are mercy  
Not till the wayward dies!  
And, oh! could the will o' Thee  
Have it that I should go  
Out o' the world o' hisses,  
Let it be so! for, oh!  
Mine is so wayward a heart  
It wanders away from Thee!"

Then it seemed to me, as I listened,  
There was suthin' that I could see  
Like a fluttering spirit flash

Out thro' the window light,  
 And then, like a fleeing comet,  
 Go off in the silent night.  
 Mebbe 'twuz only a fancy,  
 Or the flash o' my falling tear,  
 But I b'lieve 'twaz the soul o' the woman  
 Leaving her fallen sphere;  
 For she never went out o' her room,  
 And she never arose from her kneeling,  
 Till we lifted her into a coffin,  
 While rough eyes filled with feeling.

The ranchman rose, and began to pace,  
 As a thought danced over his grizzled face,  
 And said, with much more force than grace:

#### THE RANCHER'S STORY.

Wall, an' I'll say my say, fur the reason why  
 That it is my turn, it is, an' I  
 Must say mine afore ol' Haller 'ill tell—  
 And thet is the reason fur why,  
 An' not ez that I am any yer swell,  
 A takin' a sorryful tale-tellin' spell.

Wall, to be short, then, it wuz a ranch;

An' ranches they warent ez thick

Them times ez now they be. 'Twas down on a  
branch

O' the Brazos—you've been on the very spot,  
Rick—

And the rancher he warent so wealthy ez I—

The one I'm a speakin' uv—this uz the reason  
fur why:

He wuz suthin' o' polish, or suthin'

Uv sich like a word that book-men say, ez I've  
heerd.

There warent no book, or no language—no  
nuthin'

That he didn't know uv; so ez thet he appeared  
Ez sharp as the lightnin', an' double geared.

They sed that he "broke" in a queer kind o' way,  
Once back in the east, an' atween a night an' a  
day,

Hed to start up, wi' a patterin' heart, an' fly—  
So he's poorer 'an me, thet's the reason fur why.

One thing thet be sure, thar wuz, ez I'd vote,

The ungodliest queer-like tossin' an start

Uv his rascalish eye; an' I'd put up my coat,

Thar wuz suthin' stept heavy inside on his heart

In the tenderest places—but thet's neither you  
nor I!

Fur it's out o' the subjec', an' thet's the reason  
fur why.

He wuz poorer, an' yet he wuz richer ez me;  
Leastwise none o' us ranchers cud buy the  
chap out.

For he had one lump o' treasure, you see,—

A treasure, you see, ez would put to the rout  
Yer millions uv gold an' ranches; and thet  
Wuz a bright little girl; an', you bet,  
Thar warent no thing—'cept God—cud get  
Thet gay leetle blossom, an' thar warn't no use  
fur to try—

An' so he wuz richer ez me; *thet's* the reason  
fur why.

God kept her a-livin' a time, ez mebbe he might  
Meller the hard man's heart, perhaps.

But God wuzn't going to let her to stay

Till she grew so old ez to hev the same hard  
way.

So, when the years begin to grow to thet pint, a  
blight

Gets up an' out o' the Brazos, an' taps

Et the rancher's door; an' the darlin' she let's it  
in.

So it eats et this jew'l o' this man o' sin  
Till she grows ez slim an' thin-limbed ez a  
pin—

Till she bended down, ez a withery blossom stem,  
An' her face dipped down i' the dust o' the earth,  
Ez the flower on the tip o' thet stem, the same!  
So thar another burden o' dirt wuz throwed on  
his box o' mirth.

Then he dirted his knees wi' the dust thet wuz  
coverin' her;

An' he used to say: "O the clouds hang low!  
And my life's as a wall, and the clouds be big wi'  
myrrh,

And they break on my life, as a wall; and so  
They run so low they keep a breaking, and oh!  
Baptizing it over wi' myrrh as bitter as woe!"

Then he stole her up, an' gathered her up an'  
burned

His jew'l to ashes—they say—an' urned  
The same! Then, ez a ghost, he vanished away.  
Now, I reckon he's somwhar bearin' his urn to-  
day!—

With thet strange kind uv a-tossin' about uv his  
eye,  
Which no one knows the terrible reason fur why.

---

A tale is but breath,  
Yet life is a tale  
Borne over, by Death,  
And told in a wail,  
Or in sweetness, hereafter.

Our lives are but tales  
Told in accents of pathos  
Of loves under veils—  
Told in burnings of passion,  
In tempests of wails,  
In flashes of wit,  
In songs, in curses—  
In all, every whit,  
Lives are tales!



## PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

[Being the biography of a *modern* pilgrim in verse.]

## CANTO ONE.



OW down upon the Mississippi river,  
 Where balminess was king the most o'  
 year,

Where's more of heat and more of languid fever  
 Than chilly days and tingling toe and ear,  
 Where's less of bleeding lungs than bile upon the  
 liver—

Here, in a little town—its name shall not ap-  
 pear—

There dwelt a lowly family of two,  
 Wherein, one morning, there was some ado.

One morning in the balmy month of June,  
 (I said before it was not balmy all the year),  
 There was a bustle in the little town;  
 And matrons to and fro began to steer,  
 And, meeting at the corners, whisper undertone  
 A secret each into another's ear—

But whisper confidentially, of course—  
 What was it? marriage, cradle, or a hearse?

The saucy boys quit kicking up their heels,  
 Each hangs about the corner for a chance  
 To steal behind some matron, as she deals  
 This secret to a friend, with cautious glance—  
 Forgets to cry for toys, forgets his meals,  
 Hands punched into the pockets of his pants—  
 Forgets *all*, but his big desire to hear  
 'The news that's setting all the town on ear.

The fact is this—to keep the ball in motion  
 That set the town in such a fermentation,  
 And proved so bring-the-dead-to-life a potion—  
 The fact is this—confuse my trepidation,  
 I scarce can say it! may be its a notion,  
 But then a child new-born into temptation  
 I hate to think, or speak of. But the fact  
 Is Pilgrim's born, *was* born, to be exact.

Hence those mysterious, knowing words and  
 winks  
 Of sly-tongued advocates of generation;  
 And clamorous boys with their “by Georges” and  
 “by Jinks”—  
 One gossip finally told all creation,

So I, at length, got hold one of the links  
And dragged up all the chain—hence this invasion

Of household rights—in other words, this story;  
For which I'm paid in criticism, not glory.

O, for the innocence of heart I knew,  
When, standing by my mother's side, I gazed  
On Pilgrim, wondering at the great ado  
Over so small a thing, and stood amazed  
At all they said of good and beautiful and true  
And great accomplishments that would be  
blazed—

Around the world connected with his name!  
Ah! surely, thought I, he is born to fame!

That's nothing new or rare; for scores or more  
Are born to fame in every rushing year,  
But bred, alas! upon another score—  
Born in the tumult of expectant cheer,  
But bred to disappointment—to deplore  
Their loss of innocence and all that's dear.  
Biographies begin with "born—and bred,"  
As though beyond some things remained unsaid  
Of great importance—something grand, sublime,  
Before we write the final sentence—*Dead!*

'Twould save a deal of trouble and of time  
 To start with *born and dead*, instead  
 Of *born and bred*; for life is like a rhyme,  
 Over a very great expanse is spread,  
 Yet might be written in a single line—  
 The same thing o'er and o'er like a repine.

Well, then, to hasten on the hero, I  
 Will pass by twelve or sixteen years or so;  
 For babies only eat, and laugh, and cry,  
 And boys are saucy, all alike, you know;  
 Hence, as I said, I pass those two times by,  
 And introduce the hero proper—So  
 I take him up again, as in the verses  
 That follow this, wherein I speak of hearses.

God! do I hear, then, yonder damned bell,  
 Pour groans for dead from out its brazen lips?  
 Accursed crown! I reel beneath thy knell,  
 Which strikes my heart down like a sledge,  
 and rips  
 A half-well wound! No sound resounds so fell  
 As bell-knolls; for their tolling never drips  
 Upon my mind like music, since the time—  
 No matter—that was in another clime!

I see a box of varnished ebony,  
 Lined with fine silk and velvet, white as purity—

With glinting silver studs; and hinged, I see,  
With gleamy gold. How fair! Yet not se-  
curity

Against the pain of the bereft, who cry  
Around the dead; nor yet against the ob-  
scurity

That waits the *favoured* sleeper; for to sleep  
*The* sleep is better than to live to weep,

And follow out the one within the coffin.

But let me tell you who it is that's dead,  
For fear you think it's Pilgrim—still more often  
The world would not be bothering its head  
About who died, but turn and go to laughin'

Before the hearse has wheeled a rod, instead  
Of asking, with a sad face and a serious,  
Who now has gone to try the dread mysterious?

A person's thoughts at best are like wild cattle;

They always come in droves and out of order—  
Not like a well-drilled army going to battle,  
More like the bison on the Kansan border.

So we must catch them while we can. What  
rattle

They make stampeding on the fertile plain  
Within a bold and mighty genius' brain!

Because of this unsteady rushing in  
Of incoherent droves of thought, you see,  
I wander from the straightest, strictest line  
Of this biography. But let me be  
Permitted here to say, as said before herein,  
Pilgrim "grew up," as people say. To agree  
Was not his father's and the Pilgrim's mode of  
action—

His mother, though, prevented serious faction.

It was not Pilgrim who was dead ; but, what  
Is worse, it was his mother. Even those  
Who think the very most of life would not  
Dissent from this opinion far, God knows.  
She was a noble mother, all folks thought—  
As for his father, judging from his nose,  
He was not quite so noble; so, you see,  
Poor Pilgrim's show—but I must go to tea!

Well, I have been to tea, and drunk it too,  
Although I think it isn't healthy very;  
And coffee hurts the nerves, I always knew,  
Yet, like a toper, save not quite so merry,  
I always drink them both, and so do you.

I know I'd better be a toper cheery  
Than growling with dyspeptic melancholy  
Brought on by swilling tea and coffee, Ollie!

I beg your pardon, I did not intend

The world should know that you are standing  
here,

And that your kisses, on my forehead, send

A rush of inspiration through—no matter where,  
But I suppose the heart, tho' some would say the  
mind.

Fair Ollie, now I promise, yea I swear  
I'll never use your name again in verse;  
So kiss my lips forgiveness—here's my purse!

Go, then, and purchase anything you please—  
(Cash keeps the most of women out of pets.

It will, if anything on earth, appease  
A displeased woman. Strange that man for-  
gets (?)

This fact so often. Though she is a tease,  
She's sweet. Who bets by her wins all his  
bets.)

Sweet Ol—but then I swore that, in my verse,  
I'd name thee not, for better or for worse.

So goes it; few perhaps are happier, brighter  
Than when first wed—But what has that to do  
With Pilgrim? (or with me? you ask. Ah! I'm  
a writer;

And authors' private lives are *theirs*, you know.)

Poor Pilgrim's show, (I started out to cite, or  
I rather 'gan to write, sometime ago,  
When I was called to tea,) was rather slim  
For happy home. His eyes were all a-swim

With great big tears; and many genuine snuffles  
Were smothered in his handkerchief, the while  
A hand, as thoughtless as the shovel, shuffles  
The heavy, thumping clay down, with a will,  
Upon the stupid dead. Ah! how it ruffles  
The Tahoe of his heart, so crystal still!  
And how it roils the clear, with every clod  
That falls upon his heart and dead, O God!

'Tis sad to see the last leaves fall and float  
Off on the chilly stream to some broad bay  
To mingle with the drift of many a boat,  
Shattered and tossing helpless night and day  
Upon its top-pitched swell; 'tis sad to note  
The fade of twilight; it is sad to lay  
The last sunbeam upon the couch of night  
And know that, ere it wakes, some soul takes  
flight;

'Tis sad to see the last brown, deadened blade  
Of grass buried beneath the first white snow  
Of winter; 'tis sad to hear, across the glade,



The mellow song of some lone bird, and know  
 That, when its plaintive, dying notes shall fade  
 To silence, 'tis the last; 'tis sadder, though,  
 To follow out the best friend—as a wave,  
 A body, dead, afloat—to a silent grave !

His was a massive mind; and it was proud.  
 Ill could he brook the horrid incubus  
 Of drunken tyranny. He had not bowed,  
 Before his mother's death, to a "drunken cuss,"  
 And would not now! Hard words, yet thus he  
 vowed.

Oh! "by the dogs!" how I despise a muss!  
 So I will pass it by, and give the issue:  
*He ran away!!* Poor Pilgrim, Heaven bless  
 you !

Come kiss me, O sweet, O!——(no, spare her  
 name!)

By this I mean I want new inspiration:  
 For now I sing of love. 'Tis luck for fame  
 That he was thrust, by such "concatenation  
 Of fortuitous circumstances," where he came  
 To meet fair Lilie. O sweet expectation,  
 Buzz, as a humming bird, about and utter  
 Your honeyed promises and smile and flutter!

Oh! she was loveliness itself, fair Lillie,

And purer than a white-lipped lily's flower,  
And not, like most of girls at sixteen, silly.

Her great eyes beggar all descriptive power.  
And they had looked on timid Pilgrim, till he  
Seemed floating on their violet tide. No hour  
Was long, when she was with him; when away  
A minute seemed a lonesome, lingering day.

But it would take a most stupendous volume  
To write up all the course of this true love—  
How it did blind their prudence, how enthral  
them.

I'll not say what a futile fancy wove  
Around them; or say what a flashing column  
Of crumbling sweets, a-gilt with fickle love,  
They built by moonlight—and they never thought  
That what seems "is" turns out more oft "is  
not."

I'll not here say how, when they ventur'd near  
Each other, (as two little crystal lakes,  
The size of silver dollars, do appear  
To rush together for each others' sakes,)—  
I'll not say how they then both whispered,  
"Dear!"

Then melted in each others' arms and—aches!—

I'll stop and stuff this into my portmanteau,  
And after dinner finish up the canto.

For now I'm hunting food, and hunting *rest*.

And who could rest and write of early love?  
For, as I write, some half-unwelcome guest  
Comes peering o'er the page, mild as a dove,  
And yet it stirreth something in my breast  
To painfulest convulsions, which do move  
The deepest soul, and lift the lake of tears  
Until it overflows the bank of years.

My own unrest is sad enough regret;

And yet, sweet Nameless—I can better bear  
My flow of tears than that the violet  
Be faded from thine eyes. O dregs of myrrh!  
But then I cannot write these things. They set  
My hand a-tremble, and the white page blur.  
O sweet, pure, patient love, I feel thy breast  
Throb through the years to mine, *unrest! unrest!*

O, I would give my gold, (but have I much?)

And would I be a poet if I had?)  
Would give all my ambition, (and of such  
Have I enough to curse me, as 'tis said?)—  
Give—but there is no word can touch  
My passion for a rest! Oh, could I tread



Where once I trod, I know I would not be  
Where now I am, but be at rest with thee!

\* \* \* \* \*

I promised I would tell you all about  
Poor Pilgrim's love affair with rosy Lilie,  
(Or rather *lily* Lilie; but it's out,  
So let it go as written, sound or silly,)—  
His love for her was certainly devout.

He ought to marry her—the rub is, “*will* he?”  
I think he either will not or he will;  
But this, of course, remains a mystery still.

The deepness of their love I could not write.

The warmness of their love would melt a heart.  
The sweetness of their love was such delight,  
'Twas not describable by any art.

'Twas warm, o'erpowering, passionate, full by  
night,

By day, confiding, tender—Not a part  
Of all but what was both. Love's power was  
regal.

'Twas fondly intimate—and yet was legal.

So argued *they*, at least, through all the Spring  
And Summer and the Autumn days. But now

The Winter comes and spreads his frosty wing;  
And frost, that stings like fire, is on each plow  
Of steely blue; and scintillations fling  
From off the moldboards up to stars that throw  
Their scintillations from the gleamy sky,  
The moldboard of the universe, on high.

Howl on, ye hideous winds! ye swift-winged  
snows,

That strike and smart like icy hornets' stings,  
Beat! beat! and mock ye Nature's dying throes!

Howl! beat! O desolating, cruel things!  
Little ye dream, and less ye care, God knows,

The ruin ye are working! O for wings  
Of mercy, that I might o'erspread the world  
And shield it from this tempest heaven-hurled!

Alas! and there's a special work of ruin

This cold of winter wrought; for 'tis agreed  
That balmy climes make better love, and few in  
The cold of winter love so warmly, need  
I mention? Snow-storms block the bliss o' woin'.

For man, or maid is so much like a weed,  
Affected deeply by the state of weather--  
And Love's no stabler than a floating feather.

To make it short, as sad as it may be,

The fountain of poor Pilgrim's love froze over,

Or *seemed* to freeze, more true; and so, you see,  
He was so fearful and so changed a lover  
He broke her heart by coolness; and, for she  
Had given *all* to him. O God above her!  
How could he ravish all she had to prize,  
And then, poor girl, neglect her, while she dies?

Man never loves with half the love of woman.

His purest love is more than half but passion.  
The chastest love of the most pure and true man  
Is not so passionless, in any fashion,  
As woman's worst. It surely is not human  
That lusty men should come and lay their  
trash on

The shrine of woman's love, then steal her trust  
And flee and leave her but the scars of lust.

'Tis strange how balmy winds may bend young  
trees;

Stranger how kind young lovers' kindness  
blows

And bends their action by its loving breeze,

Till what they plant for joys grow knotted woes!  
The Pilgrim gets bewildered, so he flees

And leaves her—turns her flowery spring to  
snows.

All else she bore, but this is Hell—if *this*  
She plunge away from, would she do amiss?

See Lillie yonder, with so many scars

Of soul, and marks without of inner pain—  
So young, and yet, in those few days of wars,  
She suffered twenty years! She cried, in vain,  
Out in the woe and waste of air. The stars  
Did quiver at her wail, and yet the plain  
Died into nothing in the ears of men—  
And so then has she heart to cry again?

She standeth quailing at the midnight shimmer

That floats far down upon the moaning river.  
See what a passionate convulsive tremor

Creeps o'er her frame! She starts! a death-  
cold shiver

Of woes chills her pale as the still moon's glim-  
mer!

She looks back quick—she leaps—is still for-  
ever!

Blame not. Who knows, O woe - bewildered  
daughter!

Thy secret, save God and the tongueless water.

Men talk about committing suicide,

But only he, who stands and looks aghast

Into the world beyond, and yet does hide  
 Determination then to quit the past—  
 Leap into the unknown, Hell-deep, dark tide,  
 Knows what he talks about ; yet he's the last  
 To mention of his purpose; so men mock  
 At him, then fall upon the self-same rock.  
 'Twere well to think more deeply ere we talk.

'Twere well to scan the heights of mercy first.  
 For could we see o'erhead the swooping hawk  
 We would not blame the timid quail that durst  
 Dart swiftly and so headlong 'gainst a rock,  
 And thus meet death, rather than face the worst—  
 And so familiar Death appears less dread  
 To some sad ones than swooping woe o'erhead.

But why are men fore'er and everlasting  
 On suiciding making such a fuss ?  
 For every single human found a-casting  
 Himself from woe to death (poor wretched  
 cuss !)

A *thousand* thoughtless people more are blasting  
 The vigor of their lives, killed by the muss  
 And rash excess of *false*, polluting pleasure—  
 Do they not suicide in the same measure?

Great Jove! I look into the glass, and see  
 My eyes stand outward, in a perfect stare,



And pop half from their sockets! I must flee

This subject, or, ere I am half aware,  
I'll find my own throat cut—so let it be!

I'd care but little, if I only dare (?)—  
Eheu! my very skin crawls with affright,  
To think of what I've dared to write to-night!

. . . . .

Ring! ring! ring! O, horror-tongued bell!

Fall on our ears turned into woeful words!

Ye people, winding in a speechless spell,

But thinking thoughts more bitter than the  
Lord's,

Ye would consign *her* to the deep of Hell,

Who sleeps before you, innocent as the birds

That break the sad uncharitable still

By sinless songs of love from every bill.

Cold Pharisaic man, who would forbid

Her purer erring soul a place with ye,

You would have done the same that Lillie did!

Young mother, buoyant at the boundless glee

Thy first born showeth, even despite the chide

Its sterner father gives, how would it be

Were it conceived and born without a name?

Sweet woman, wouldst thou not have done the  
same?

Warm-hearted man, that *only* would condemn  
 Because your moral standard calls it wrong ;  
 Had you been she, you would have done the same !  
 And maidens, gathering in a weeping throng  
 Around the wayward dead, ye mourn the shame  
 Of whom, a year ago, ye envied strong—  
 Ye would have done the same as she, and are,  
 God knows, her most forgiving mourners far !

I know, too faithful woman—I confess  
 That, if my very goodness—all the best  
 Of all God gave, with which the world to bless,  
 Had led *me* where thy love abounding breast  
 Led *thee*, I should not deem I did amiss  
 To shun the train of curses, for the rest  
 Beyond the River—I would calmly leap  
 Into the flood and o'er me let it sweep !

Curse on ! curse deep ! curse well ! ye damned  
 tongues,

Your curses cannot reach beyond the grave.  
 Damn ! damn the innocent, forget her wrongs !

Thank Heaven ! she does not hear your pious  
 rave !

God will restore her what to her belongs.

The times may come when you will vainly  
 crave

What blessings God gives her. She bore the  
 worst

Here, *there* ye cursers may become the cursed !

Well, well, there is no need of one man's bat-  
 tling

The creeds of all the world of orthodoxies—

It were as useless as the idle prattling

Of busy babes; for Satan has his proxies

E'en 'mong the moral—aye, how many a fatling

Of Hell is clothed as priest — how many

hawks' eyes

Look out of doves' meek feathers! Yet—ah! yet

High Heaven knows them every one, I bet !

Sweet Lillie, O! how art thou bruised and crushed!

Yet men would stamp thee more—well, let  
 them stamp,

The wreck may be transplanted (when all's hushed

O'er thee), where human feet dare never tramp,

And there leave into life forever flushed

With love and peace immortal, when every  
 scamp

That cursed thee here may wail for "water!  
 water!"

And not find it, as thou didst, injured daughter.

And do not too uncharitably judge  
Pilgrim in this calamitous affair.

Fair maids, spare all unnecessary grudge  
Against unfaithful him. Pull not the hair  
Upon a head already sore—fie, fudge!

He is no worse than many more, who bear  
A better public name, whom you let simper  
“I love you, dear!” at which you sigh and whim-  
per.

Think you that, when he first was photographed  
In her soul-curtained eyes, he dared to dream  
Of anything unkind? And when they laughed  
At older warnings, while their faces beam  
With fresh young love; and when they over-  
quaffed

Love, till their hearts, impassioned, Oh! did  
seem

To reel with very drunkenness, until  
It stole their prudence and their sterner will;

And they went staggering down a bank of bliss  
And flowering beauty, till they fell, aghast,  
Low in the muddy stream and foul abyss  
That bound such banks below at last—

Think you he deemed their chaste and youthful  
kiss,

They then exchanged, would ever be to blast  
Her beauteous life? or dreamed where they were  
going,

Swift as the wind, because of their warm wooing?

O what a world of contradictions this!

The very motives, that would prompt a man  
To shower on others well-meant gifts of bliss,

Spread ruin on the very road o'er-run.

A cruel blow seems kinder than a kiss.

Start to perform the very best you can,  
Your kindness seems, at last, to simply end  
In tragedy. Be kind, and you offend.

And every pleasant thing that God has given

Seems but a snare to tangle one in woe;

And every woe, by which a man is driven,

Drives him where only fruits of blisses grow;

Make life a hell, and that will win you heaven.—

And he that tastes of happiness below

May break his fiddle for the time to come—

Make your oration *here*, but *there* you must be  
dumb.

God placed in man the golden gift of love,

And which would be attended with the sweetest

Enjoyment with which all of earth could move  
A human heart, although 'tis called the fleetest.  
Of *false* love this is true—O land above!

It surely, heaven, is not thou that meetest  
Such love to mortals simply to enhance  
The lassitude that followeth the dance!

O for a love that would be warm eternal!

Unbroken by the coolness of a blast  
And unembittered by that thing infernal,  
Propriety, worst foe thou, loving, hast!  
Love that is free indeed would be supernal—

Aye, world! here lies the mystery at last;  
That all the *blessings* heaven has bestowed  
Are *curses* turned by customs of the crowd!

O, there is bliss indeed in being wed;

But 'tis not in the wedding of the hand,  
Nor in the law of weddings, which is read,  
Nor in the wedding custom does demand.  
The bliss of half the wedded ones is dead,  
Because they are not wedded with the band  
That never galls—the wed, whose touch and kiss,  
At fifty years of age is young with bliss.

The many curses that some preachers claim  
Do follow pleasure, as a punishment

Sent down from God, are not at all His blame.

They are alone the curses that are sent  
On hearts of innocence, (here is the shame!)

By godless customs! 'Would the veil were rent  
From off the truth, till day devour the night,  
And pleasure would be, what it should be, *right!*

I do not find the stiffened jackets in

The works of Christ. They are the devils'  
work,

Who wish to turn all goodness into sin

And make the gloom of sin—its soulless irk—  
Appear as goodness; hence befooled men,

Beneath their stiffened jackets, bear a dirk  
Sheathed in their dismal, devil-given creeds,  
Which, when they speak, stabs truth until it bleeds.

'Tis not because of Jesus' sweet Christianity;

But 'tis because men will pervert the truth,  
And twist high Heaven's sane into insanity,

And cramp our Saviour's mercy into ruth,  
And *would* press all the human from humanity,

And sprinkle whiteness on the heads of youth.

O Jesus! will it ever, ever be

That men can see the mercy thou canst see?

I know a life, the sweetest sacrifice,

But one, earth ever knew. O, she was great—

Great by the standard of most human eyes,  
And greater in the eyes round Heaven's gate.  
Ideal beauty blushed, fell on its knees,  
And stammered, as it tried to emulate  
*Her* beauty; for it did surpass th' ideal—  
Her meek unbounded beauty, yet was real.

And she was born a child of rarest song  
And thoughts of mild, yet big, magnificence—  
A poetess even when she lay along  
The blooming stream of childhood; and the  
sense

Was riveted to hear her chastened tongue  
Pour forth her written sonnet-eloquence,  
In her most song-engifted utterance—  
The very blossoms listened in a trance!

So even her beauty, most divinely gifted,  
Stood pouting, envious of her gift of mind.  
But, O, her boundless soul seemed ever lifted  
Beyond the reach of selfishness—too kind  
To have seen a fly adrift, and not have drifted  
In sympathy, most superfine-refined,  
Down with the drowning mote, to reach and weep  
Till she could lift the small waif from the deep.

She grew to womanhood. Financial crash  
Had left her aged father penniless,



And many children, too, to bear the lash  
Of penury; and ease withdrew caress  
They once had known, with all its happy flash.

She was the youngest in their homelessness—  
The tenderest of all, yet the divine  
Within her would not darken, but would shine.

She snatched the circumstances by the bit  
And charioted her people from despair.  
She gave up good renown; that used to flit  
So beauty-sanctified before her, where  
She roamed in fields of poesy and wit.

She smiled above the under-flowing tear,  
And turned from beauty, poetry and fame,  
To lowly work, a sacrifice for them.

A fast she laid upon her soul! O what  
A graveyard of the grandest hopes she built,  
To work for them! What golden wishes she  
forgot,  
To live for them! What monuments, a-gilt  
With love, she left half made and left to rot,  
To suffer on for them! What flowers did wit  
That she had digged to plant beside her door  
Of life—digged, but unplanted evermore!

And *then, because* the world did sympathize  
With her and love, what none could help but  
love,

And marvel at her willing sacrifice,  
They *envied* her the little praise, and wove  
A subtle net of ruinous treacheries:

And still she found no fault, and did not move  
From out her path of kindness; but she wept  
Her grief alone, while those who cursed her slept.

She bore it silently, tho' painfully,  
Until it froze the roses on her cheek,  
And slew the smile that wantoned in her eye—  
Still she remembered "Blessed are the meek!"  
At last they stigmatized the purity

Of one too pure for earth; and then, to break  
The last chord in her heart, forgiving, kind,  
They drove from home, the injured pure in mind!

And yet their spite went after her afar,  
Until the poison from their serpent hiss  
Stung deeper in the daily opened scar—  
Rebroke her broken heart! And this, ah, this  
Was more than such a woman's heart could bear,  
And so—she died! Then Jesus stooped to  
kiss

And dress the wounds with leaves of Gilead ;  
For *there* was balm, which turned the sad to glad !

Well, so it is: the ones who give their all  
Unselfishly to others, get least thanks below ;  
And hence it is I wonder, and I call  
This life a contradiction. It is so.  
The selfish get the sweets, the kind the gall—  
The cruel get the weal, the kind the woe.  
The world's too mean to learn the reason why ;  
And so the best and kindest quickest die.

. . . . .

We know but little of poor Pilgrim's pains,  
He nursed, then loathed, then blessed, then  
cursed, by turns.

The soul forever after knowledge strains,  
Although 'tis *sorrow* to the heart that *learns*—  
And yet the heart of man wails out complains,  
If life refuses more of "sorrow"—yearns  
For more of "knowledge ! knowledge !" tho' it  
knows

'Tis always pickled in the juice of woes !

I know but little of poor Pilgrim's pain ;  
But this I know, 'twas surely deep of soul.

'Twas much as he could do to bear the strain  
 That broke the strings of her sweet lyre with  
 dole.

God pity what kept dancing in his brain!  
 Sometimes he almost lost his self-control.  
 Sometimes he trembled with a half-begot  
 Desire to go where Lilie was—widl thought !

Had men been more forgiving to those two,  
 And not bewildered them with their damnation,  
 Of course, they would have wed and journeyed  
 thro'

A usefule life together.—Desolation,  
 Despair and Death had lost, at least, a few  
 Morsels to glut their greedy desperation.  
 Both erred at first ; *he* sinned at last ; but men  
 Are half responsible for Pilgrim's sin.

Well, well, altho' each has a life within  
 That may be sad forever, yet one must  
 Pursue an outward course, amid earth's din,  
 That is not always so bowed in the dust.  
 Outside a medley picture hangs to win—  
 One must not be big fool enough to trust  
 His inner life to lie in public gaze,  
 But smile and act lies in a thousand ways.

So, Pilgrim, we will drop this horrid matter,  
 And send you on your falsifying way.  
 Remember this tho': "Don't go near the water!"  
 Remember, too, your tragical affray,  
 When you would woo again a frail fair daughter.  
 Now lift your hat and bid the past "good day!"  
 And go—the Lord knows where, and so do I,  
 And I will tell the public "by and by."

What histories are writ in "by and by!"

The buxom country lass laughs out, at eve,  
 "Ha! Jake will be here, by and by, and I—  
 Won't I be jolly then, you better b'lieve!  
 And kiss him, with a, 'how is that for high?'"  
 Ah! how her happy healthy spirits heave!  
 But then—Jake doesn't come, alas! and so  
 It grows into a "by and by" of woe!

Our joys are half made up of "by-and-bys,"

Which we expect here to participate,  
 How few of which we ever realize!

We are not now, but "by and by" are, great.  
 We now are blind, but "by and by" have eyes.

But one thing certain, if we only wait  
 And work in godly patience, you and I  
 Will grasp the whole in yon great "By-and-by."

O Ellen, with your holy violet eye!  
O thousand promises of "by-and-by!"  
O expectation born to smile and die!  
O "by-and-by," thou unintended lie!  
O may we not yet realize, on high,  
The promises and all the memory  
Of what we *hoped* to have beneath the sky,  
At least, above it in *the* "by-and-by?"

Now "comes the tug of war" in truth; for now  
There are the howls, the roar, the crack, the  
crash,  
The yells, the oaths, the wails, the rush, the row,  
The screams, the cries, the shouts, the fire, the  
flash,  
The tears, the blood, the thud, the wounds, the  
woe,  
The cuts, the breaks, the prayers, the deaths,  
the gash,  
The curse, the damn, the hopes, the fears, the  
scars,  
The smoke—aye, *all* the hideousness of wars!

And yet men preach and preach for more recruits  
To gorge this hideousness, with all the zeal  
Christ's ministers would show for Him. The  
brutes

Stand still, pop-eyed, to see us humans reel,  
Dead-drunk with blood. What horrid blastful  
fruits

Grow on the tree of war! Men make a meal  
Of other men, thus fat themselves for others  
Again to fat on—this is war, my brothers!

Well, Pilgrim he was fool enough, (or wise  
Enough, or what you please,) to go to war.  
I'll tell you how it happened, to tell no lies:

He still was bleeding from the open scar  
Of most disastrous love. O how he tries

To sew it up! but tries it vainly; for  
The stitches rip; and so—ah! sad mishap!  
At every stitch more ghastly grows the gap!

It isn't many steps down from the blues

Unto despair, and he for sure had got them.  
The way I generally have them "beats the Jews;"

But now, just now, I'm free of them, let rot  
them!

He looked at Uncle Sam's big "gun-boat" shoes  
And thought them better than he once had  
thought them.

He thought he surely could not make it worse;  
Besides an *office* might refill his purse!

He thought of living, then he thought of dying,  
Then thought he cared but little which he did,  
He thought of what had past, then fell to crying;  
He thought of bullets, then he sat and slid  
Down on a plank of glory—sat defying  
His fears—then roused and tried to rid  
Himself of that most hateful thought, the curse  
Of going to his grave without a hearse.

Well, after he had sat, and sat, and brooded  
Upon this subject till he thought he knew  
The whole of it, I think he had concluded  
To stay at home—just then an old cock crew!  
And then his resolution he denuded  
Of all its gloss, and saw that it was true,  
He had denied his country; so the man  
Ran o'er the whole thing in his mind again.

And, when he came around again, of course,  
He ended with the self-same resolution,  
“I do deny my country!” Loud and hoarse  
The old cock crew again. Confusion  
Took hold of Pilgrim; but he had to force  
His thought o'er it again; but some delusion  
Made him deny again; and, growing wroth,  
He said: “I will deny thee, country!” with an  
oath.



And then the old cock crew so sad, so loud—  
He burst his mighty heart, and fell and died !  
Then Pilgrim went and wound him in a shroud—  
Bore him to the potato-patch, and cried,  
And laid him in the ground ; the while a crowd  
Of wondering, weeping hens, with heads askew,  
soft sighed  
To hear clods fall on chiefest of the cocks,  
And asked each other, “ was he orthodox ? ”

That made him think of how *he* might grow famous,

By crowing others into ranks ; and so  
He turned recruiting officer—to shame us !  
He thought, “ Oh, if I die from overflow  
Of patriotism, surely that a glorious name is—  
Die by o'ercrowing, like the cock, you know.  
Oh ! how the patriotic maids will stand and weep  
Above me, strewing flowers where I sleep ! ”

And so he went to shouting, *shouting*, SHOUTING,  
“ RECRUITS ! ” and finally became a colonel.  
Ah ! any one could go to war, *sans* pouting  
For so much fame—and pay ! O, this eternal  
Blab over military glory, I feel like scouting !  
The men that get the name be most infernal

Cowards, as a rule, and hide behind, and grumble  
At, those who earn the crown for them—the  
humble!

I did it once, that is, I stood afront  
These famous cowards, to help to win their  
crown

Of glittering glory—bore the blasted brunt  
Of hardship for the few—for their renown.

I lived a life in death for them. I wot  
Be fool enough to do't again: I've grown  
More sparing of my flesh and bone since then—  
Grown older—selfisher—like other men.

Well, Pilgrim went to war; and he, they say,  
Was quite the youngest and the handsomest  
Commissioned colonel in the "late affray."

O, what conflicting thoughts warred in his  
breast!

He tried to throw his memories away,  
And think of fame; he dare not think of rest,  
It always had the opposite effect,  
Unrest, because it made him recollect.

But Pilgrim went to war—but did not go  
Because he loved his country (though he did),  
But went to one war just to shun the woe

## PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

Of other war (within), and there was need  
Of some such move, from what I know

And what you know, for I've told you—forbid  
Not Pilgrim this escape, or he might rave  
Himself too early to a humble grave !

So Pilgrim went to war, and so did many;

But out of all the thousands men that went,  
Less went for country than went for the penny—  
That is the pay. But, of these few God sent  
For patriots, one was my brother Bennie.

For country and for God Ben pitched his tent—  
But then you're unacquainted with my brother,  
And so I must explain, confound the bother !

His face was thinner than a common razor;

His hair was blacker than a common crow's;  
He tried a mustache, but he could'nt "raise her;"

He limped from corns and bunions on his toes;  
And, when he passed a lady, he would sure amaze  
her

By blushing, whereupon he'd blow his nose  
"To put it off" (to use a common term)  
Then whistle off the danger of her charm.

Just five feet in his boots, and not much taller

When out of them—with little, meek black  
eyes !

His neck so short he scarce could wear a collar.

But Ben was nimble as the nimblest flies,  
And flies were quick as Ben, and not much  
smaller.

He never sees a woman but he shies,  
And yet he loves them all—and all men too;  
And so he loves his country, loves his God, and  
you!

A pillar in the church! and, though so small

A pillar, still he held a greater weight  
Than any other pillar of them all.

Of all words in his dictionary "hate"  
He thought the strangest word. He would not  
call . . .

But, Ben, no matter if you are so great,  
I've many other things to talk about,  
So I can't stop for you—I drop you out!

So Pilgrim went to war—and so did I.

He went to war because he was a colonel;  
I went because—because I knew not why.

The whole thing, anyhow, was most infernal;  
And all will come to see it by and by.

But, if infernal, or supernal, or eternal  
Disgrace or honor, let it be; but, anyhow,  
I hope it is the last such horrid row.

Well, Pilgrim went to war. God bless the cock  
That crew him into it! It did him good,  
If not the "cause." He fell upon the rock,  
By that manœuver, otherwise it would  
Have fall'n on him. He led the passive flock  
Of twice five hundred men, and—ate his food.  
To make it short, here, let me, reader, say,  
His regiment chanced on a fight one day.

They fought right well; so much so, I suppose,  
That Pilgrim thought it quite unnecessary  
For him to help; and so I saw his nose,  
(Oh! beautiful! I tell you he was wary!)  
Stuck from behind a tree. His voice arose—  
Crew loud and long and patriotic very—  
But let me add here, what's more to his credit,  
That, though that once, he never after did it.

So Pilgrim went to war, and served—one hundred  
days;

And so he grew not very battle-gory.  
He fought one battle (only), and his ways  
Were strange in that—at least, so goes the story.  
He shouts commands, his regiment obeys—  
Their own desires; he gets the glory,  
The hero colonel, who embraced the tree,  
The handsome colonel aged twenty three.

Wild ran his thoughts the day he left the army,  
 Or rather jumped by fits and starts and stops.  
 Remorse turns sometimes stillest lives most stormy.

He sleeps. Dear sleep ! here troubles curtain  
 drops.

Life has no other gift so pleasant for me.

Some think they find in juices of the hops  
 A pleasanter. Well, let him sleep, poor fellow,  
 Perhaps his sorrows, while he sleeps, may mellow.

Go to, and tattle! yea, go to, and babble!

Tell all the truth and five times more of lies!  
 Nor stop to think, that but the low-bred rabble  
 Would stoop to taint their tongues; for never  
 pries

A cultured man, but fools and asses dabble

In what is none their business. All the "whys?"  
 And "wherefores?" of all people's business, but  
 their own,

Lie with the lower-bred—with them alone.

Besides the greater curse of tattling is,

'Tis always 'gainst the better, worthier ones.  
 The really bad and low are free from this,

The ones that fill the social, moral thrones,  
Are slandered. Serpents do not care to hiss  
At foul low toads, but shake their rattle-bones  
And spit at higher beings in the scale,  
At humans. O thou cursed "tattle-tale!"

The wind is up to-night, my spirits down;  
And sadness sits with low and bowèd head  
Beneath the shadow of my misnamed frown;  
("For when were sad, oft people call us mad.")  
I'm sad; for slander sneaketh thro' the town—  
A damning shadow moving *an* a tread.  
'Tis touching some one's head snow-white with  
grief;  
And yet the pitiless crowd give their belief!

I know she must be innocent, by how  
The tale is told; none tells a fact; each gives  
An unformed surmise—then they haste to throw  
A curse at her. I trace it back: the sieves  
Catch less and less at every sifting, so  
It comes to nothing—yet it grows and lives—  
Ah! yonder now the pretty victim goes;  
O beautiful! and purer than the snows!

Aye, there's the rub, if it were otherwise  
She would not then be slandered! See her lip

A-quiver with the pain! Her lustrous eyes  
 Grown dull by soaking in the tears that drip  
 Night unto night! How people mock her sighs!  
 How heavy lift the feet that used to trip  
 Light as the day! God, love her in her sadness!  
 Her sorrow is the fiendish tattler's gladness.

Some time ago we left the colonel sleeping;  
 (For men now took to calling Pilgrim colonel.)  
 And thus it is that those who do least reaping  
 Get most the spoils of wars. The privates *earn*  
 all,

The leaders get all, to make the assertion sweeping,  
 And so get rid a subject so infernal!  
 I said we left the colonel sleeping, and  
 That's true, we did, I'd have you understand.

His sleep however did not seem to rest him.  
 He traveled forty thousand miles in thought.  
 I think he'll tell his dream, if you request him.  
 I only know this much, and that I got  
 From the convulsive jerks that did molest him  
 And snatches from his speech—the plot  
 Of *all* his dream was too clandestine deep  
 For me to read the whole he thought asleep.

He went almost two times around the world;  
 And, every step he took, he stumbled over



Old memories in his fall; and there was swirled  
A sea of blood about him; and would hover  
Old footsteps back of him; and, when he whirled,  
The ghost of one once beautiful reached for  
the rover;

And then this vision would be broken by  
A fall o'er an open grave, where, lying nigh,

Another hope breathed out its last; and then  
He grasped his eyes, as from his memory  
A flash, like lightning o'er a battle plain,  
Streamed out and glimmered far and nigh  
About him o'er the blood and corpses, slain,  
Of hopes—O God! of *everything* could die  
And he could wish to live!—and then it darkened;  
And so he stumhled on, and shook and hearkened.

It flashed again, and he stood up afront  
A leaning tombstone, where gleamed in the  
light

A name red-writ by blood and by the brunt  
Pen of despair—name, *Lilie!* he reeled to  
right—

A thousand slanderous fingers seemed to point  
Out of the dimmer dark. He cursed the bit-  
ter sight,

And shut his eyes and stumbled on; till, lo!  
He stumbled in a river red with woe!

He heard the splash and heard the hideous scream  
Of a drowning woman, interluded by  
Her prayers for him, who sent her there. The  
stream

Reached up. She uttered one wild cry—  
It broke the quietude, and—broke his dream!

He started out of sleep! His lips were dry!  
His face was white! His hands did tremble; and  
His heart seemed bursting from its mortal band!

One poet sings, "life is an empty dream!"

Another sings the opposite, and says  
"Tis real and is earnest!" Well, we deem  
That both are right and both are wrong (strange  
phrase)—

As if the things we see in dreaming only seem!

Aye, they are real earnest, and do craze  
Some minds. Life is a sort of dream, I know—  
A real dream, and earnest with its woe!

Some people's lives are one long night-mare sleep

Of misery. They try to shriek—to cry  
Themselves awake, but cannot—O, how deep  
Their slumber! and how desolate they lie,

And cannot stir a toe, or even weep!

O, they would give a world to wake, or die!

Ah! you, who know the dread of night-mare, go  
Pity those stretched in the night-mare of their woe!

Some revel in a perfect bliss, I know—

A dream, in youth's luxuriant love, of sweets

They think to wake to after they shall grow

Some older. The morning of their manhood  
beats

The gong for breakfast at their heads; and, lo!

They wake but to partake of chaffs and cheats,

And turn and curse the bed of roses and of bliss

They pillowed on, and sigh, "Ah, well, I wis!"

Some lives dream on and on, but dream no thing

Of much importance—dream of platitude,

And talk their dreams aloud. Some sing

A dream of beauties destitute of good.

Some dream, and, as they dream, they swing

Sometimes beyond this worldly amplitude

And bring back, from the region of a star,

Some thing, some thought—grand, glorious, from  
afar!

These are the geniuses, sublime of head.

Some dream forever out beyond the crowd

And whisper them to us; these are the dead.

Some dream forever, altho' never loud,  
Low down by buried coffins they have wed.

Some sleep, and, dumber than one in a shroud,  
Dream nothing; these are what I call the "sticks!"  
Some dream but dissipations; these are "bricks!"



## BE IT SO.



HAT framer of imaginations  
 has not his platitudes?  
 And mine is on me.

Light and dull as withered cornstalks.  
 My brain lies in its sheathing,  
 Like juiceless pumice in a cider press.  
 I laugh at nothings—

Stare blank at keenest of wit-faces.  
 My fancies glut themselves on nothings,  
 Satisfied.

The sun-engilded cloud,  
 That swings along the sunset, like a censer,  
 Is nothing more magnificent to-day  
 Than tumble-weeds  
 Rolling over the sere'd Winter-fields.  
 The green leaves, the tracts of the Church of  
 Nature,  
 Shaking at us eloquent, betimes,  
 To-day are utter blank tracts—  
 Poor brown paper—unwritten, unattractive.

The bird-songs,  
On which my fond imaginings have sailed,  
In infinite speed, in infinite beauty, in infinite  
purity,  
Up to the gates of a new born Eden,  
To-day sound as the clamorous croak of frogs.  
The glimmering river,  
On which have floated I, entranced in vision,  
Out to the LIMITLESS, and said:  
“The river of God’s peace falling into infinity—  
Grand sublimity!”  
To-day ’tis as the murky play-puddle of the street-  
boys.  
Over me the blue skies hangs as a faded dim-blue  
awning,  
Undelightful.  
The beauty of a woman’s eye is as a broken gog-  
gle-glass,  
Lying in the dusty street, dull-gleaming,  
Uncoveted.  
The redness of a woman’s cheek for loveliness,  
Is as the red bricks ’neath my feet.  
The voluptuousness of her bosom  
And deepness of the passions of her rounded  
beauties  
Are flat commonness—

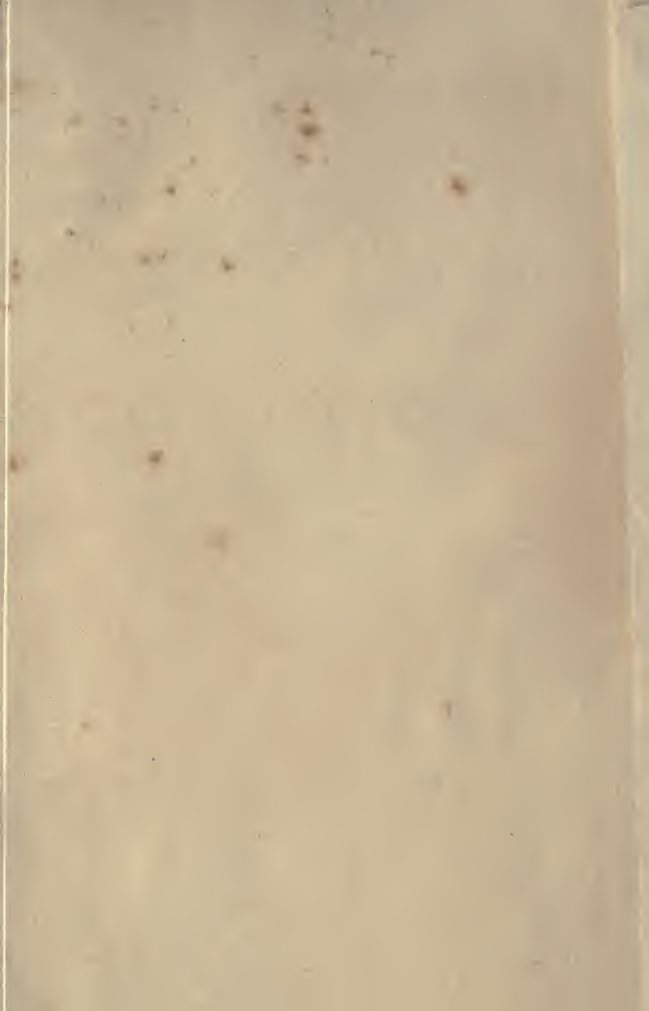
Unenticing as the rattling skeleton in my study.  
 My aspirations, dropt from the ceiling of my mind,  
 Like crumbling plaster,  
 Are swept out unregretted.  
 My hopes are bees in Winter,  
 Blank—aimless!  
 One lone hill of thought thrust up on this level,  
 Repeated at long intervals.  
 This the little flowerless thought-hill:  
 “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?”  
 Verily! verily!

*What shall I write then? What  
 Shall be the goal, the finish of the thought?  
 I've followed on the trail, till that I sought  
 Is seen a gauzy glimmering; and I know not  
 If it be some immortal ending of a thought  
 Far in the Heaven, or flash of nothing near—  
 A firefly near, or window light beyond it thro'  
 The tossing trees, or rising star set in the blue!  
 But I see no more of it—a tear  
 Has put it out! What shall I write then? What*

*Shall be the finish of the feeling wrought?  
I write—I look—I see . . . a blotted spot!  
So what I yearn to write is written . . . not;  
And what is written here, compared to what  
I would were writ, is as a blot!*







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